

Message Text

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FOR OES KRATZER AND PM VEST

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SK, TECH
SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF KOREA NUCLEAR FUEL DEVELOPMENT CORP
(KNFDC)

1. KOREAN NEWSPAPERS DATED DECEMBER 1 CARRIED ARTICLES DESCRIBING A PRESS CONFERENCE BY DR. CHU CHA-YANG, DIRECTOR OF KNFDC WHICH IS A NEWLY CREATED GOVERNMENT R&D CORPORATION. (DR. CHU AND MOST KNFDC STAFF FORMERLY WORKED AT KAERI WHERE THEY WILL CONTINUE FUEL PREPARATION STUDIES UNTIL NEW KNFDC LABORATORY FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE TAEDOK RESEARCH COMPLEX NEWAR TEAJON.) DECEMBER 9 NEWSPAPER ARTICLES EXPANDED ON THE THEME OF CHU'S EARLIER REMARKS. ACCORDING TO CHU, THE STATEMENTS HE MADE ON BOTH OCCASIONS HAVE BEEN MISINTERPRETED. IN DISCUSSION WITH SCIATT HE MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

2. KNFDC, A FUEL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY WITH NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUEL PRODUCTION, IS TO INVESTIGATE PROBLEMS ATTENDING THE USE OF LOW GRADE DOMESTIC ORES CONTAINING VANADIUM AND THE FABRICATION OF NUCLEAR POWER STATION FUEL ELEMENTS IN KOREA UTILIZING DOMESTIC OR IMPORTED YELLOW CAKE.

3. KNFDC INVESTIGATIONS ARE TO PROVIDE DATA FOR ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL FEASIBILITY OF KOREAN ORE UTILIZATION AND FUEL MANUFACTURING IN KOREA. ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS REGARDING PLANS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A YELLOW CAKE REFINING PLANT OF 100 TO 200 TONS ANNUAL CAPACITY REPRESENT
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AN EXTRAPOLATION OF CHU'S OFF-THE-CUFF GUESS, IN RESPONSE

TO A QUESTION, THAT THE CAPACITY OF AN ECONOMICALLY VIABLE PLANT WOULD LIKELY BE IN THAT RANGE.

4. CHU FEELS HIS DISCUSSION OF KNFDC'S GOAL OF PROVIDING THE TECHNOLOGY ESSENTIAL FOR PREPARATION OF NUCLEAR FUELS IN KOREA PROVED MISLEADING TO THE KOREAN PRESS WHICH IS ACCUSTOMED TO REPORTING ON CONSTRUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION PLANTS. CHU INDICATED RELUCTANCE TO SPECULATE WHETHER URANIUM CONVERSION FROM UF 4 TO UF 6 IN KOREA WOULD BE A PART OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY. TO PROCEED THAT FAR, HE SAID, WOULD DEPEND UPON THE FEASIBILITY OF REFINING AND INITIAL CONVERSION PROCESSES.

5. COMMENT: CHU'S FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY AT THIS TIME IS CONFIRMED IN THAT KNFDC FACILITIES NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT THE TAEDOK RESEARCH CO PLEX INCLUDE ONLY LABORATORY-TYPE STRUCTURES WHICH COULD BE ADAPTED TO PROTOTYPE PLANT OPERATIONS AT MOST. HIS RELUCTANCE TO GO ON RECORD AS HAVING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THE INCLUSION OF UF 4 TO UF 6 CONVERSION (AN ESSENTIAL STEP TO URANIUM ENRICHMENT) IN THE SCOPE OF HIS STUDIES IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF KOREAN SENSITIVITY TO DISCUSSION OF THE URANIUM ENRICHMENT ISSUE. CHU DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE CHAGRIN OVER HIS RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH THE NEWS MEDIA.
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